

*23 Days and Counting...*



*BY THE TIME  
YOU READ THIS,  
I'LL BE DEAD.*

*BY JULIE ANNE PETERS*



*Daeun, Nana, Yun Jin, Priscilla*





## KEY FACTS

**Full Title:** *By the time you read this, I'll be dead*

**Author:** Julie Anne Peters

**Type of Work:** Novel

**Genre:** Fiction

**Language:** English

**Date of First Publication:** 2010

**Publisher:** Hyperion Book CH

**Narrator:** Daelyn narrates the story herself, recalling her painful memories of her childhood and her current events.

**Point of View:** Daelyn narrates the story in first person, telling about her past and present events. And her narration is emotional and narrow.

**Tone:** Negative, immature, self-centered; as the novel continues, deep, understanding, and change in her attitude.

**Tense:** Past and present.

**Setting (Time):** In 21 century.

**Setting (Place):** United States of America, Daelyn's house, at the bench, Santana's house, school.

**Protagonist:** Daelyn Rice

**Major Conflict:** She has a choice between life and death, but she chooses to commit a suicide because of her childhood experience of being bullied. She already had two suicidal attempts but she ended up waking up on the hospital bed. She thinks that this is her only one and last chance

to die. However, Santana, a boy, comes into her life and interrupts her inner feelings about her determination. She has to decide in twenty-three days until the day of her determination whether she would continue living or not.

**Rising Action:** Daelyn Rice was always a target for other people to tease and bully because of her weight. Every time she moved schools, she was emotionally and physically bullied by boys and girls. She cut her wrist for the first suicidal attempt and drank ammonia for the second attempt. One day, she meets a boy of her age on the bench where she is waiting for her parents to pick her up. The boy, Santana, talks to her but she cannot answer him because she has injured her neck. She wants him to go away but he stays with her every time her mom comes to pick her up.

**Climax:** Santana and Daelyn watch a video together that he filmed. The video is about his life and how he went through cancer. The film shows another side of Santana who Daelyn didn't know about. The film was about how Santana suffered through chemotherapy since he was a little boy. At the end of the film, he kisses her. She in surprise stabs him with a pencil she was holding. She runs away from his house in disgust. He IMs her to say sorry but she doesn't accept his apology. He says that he wasn't trying to pressure her into anything she didn't want to do. And he asks if she could give him something because she knows his life story by seeing the video, but he doesn't. He asks about the neck brace she was wearing. And she answers that she drank ammonia and bleach so she could die.

**Falling Action:** Next day she goes to the school, Daelyn sees Emily waiting for her at the chapel. Emily asks if she studied for the economy test. She tells her that her mom is sending her to a fat camp. Surprisingly, Daelyn actually talks to her to not to go to the camp. At the bathroom, Taylor threatens Daelyn about her relationship with Santana and says to watch her

back. In return, Daelyn tells her to watch hers. At the bench, she sees Santana. They reconcile and Santana once again asks her to have dinner with him on his birthday. On the day of her determination, she determines what she wants to do for her life.

**Themes:** Teenage Struggle, Death, Bullying, Love, Life

**Motifs:** Suicidal thoughts,

**Symbols:** *Desire in the Mist*, Through-the-Light (website), licorice

**Foreshadowing:** Forums in the website.



## PLOT OVERVIEW

Daelyn Rice is a girl with a crushed soul who cannot talk. She has been bullied her entire life, from elementary school to high school, and has always been a "loser" that nobody wants to talk to. In fact, her life is so unhappy that she has attempted suicide a number of times in her life. That is when Daelyn comes across a website, called “Through-the-Light,” that assists suicide. For some reason, the site claims that the earliest "Date of Determination," the day that Daelyn could suicide, is after 23 days Daelyn signed up, which Daelyn reluctantly is forced to accept. However, Daelyn, determined more than ever to successfully terminate her life after failing a several attempts, quickly becomes engaged to the website and starts to blog about her life. She writes about how she was bullied since kindergarten and has continued until now, and she writes about how mean girls at her school such as Taylor, whom Daelyn refers to as JenniferJessica, constantly bully her.

After selecting her Date of Determination, Daelyn starts her countdown, hoping that the 23 days would just fly by so that she could rest in peace. On the day she signed up, while Daelyn is sitting on a stone bench waiting for her mother to pick her up after school, a white, skinny, tall boy stands next to the bench. She focuses on reading her favorite novel *Desire in the Mist* to ignore the boy, hoping that she would be born as beautiful, confident Maggie Louise in her second life. Luckily, her mother pulls by and Daelyn goes home, where she logs onto Through-the-Light and stays on the site all day.

The next day, after school, the white boy starts talking to Daelyn and introduces himself to her as Santana Girard. Daelyn just rolls her eyes and ignores him until her dad picks her up. Although Daelyn has made it clear that she wants to be left alone, Santana does not give up and

tries to approach to her. Daelyn goes through inner conflict because she is confused about Santana's intention of approaching her. She believes that he is just making fun of her and tries to keep him out of her life. Also, an obese girl at school called Emily, whom Daelyn pities for being naively hopeful about her life, despite her obesity and unpopularity, approaches Daelyn and tries to make friends with her. Just as how she treats Santana, Daelyn tries to avoid Emily. Daelyn does her best to detach her emotions from those around her, even her parents, so that she could leave everything without feeling sad.

During her period of emotional detachment, Daelyn's daily posts on Through-the-Light focuses on her hurtful past when she had been bullied quite seriously because she was obese in her childhood. Even though she is not seriously bullied currently, Daelyn does not trust anyone or even her parents, because she feels like nobody pays attention to or understands the hardships she goes through. Daelyn also reveals that she had been almost raped by three boys in middle school, which is why she does not trust any boys, including Santana. Daelyn constantly looks at and evaluates the possible methods for "self-termination" on the website.

Even though she tries to push Santana away, Santana is determined to bring Daelyn out of her shell and makes Daelyn slowly open up. She starts to respond to him through notes and IMs. He also confesses that he has Hodgkin's lymphoma, a type of cancer, which is why he is homeschooled. Daelyn envies Santana for having the fatal disease, which makes dying much more "easier." As Daelyn's Date of Determination approaches, her inner conflict between wanting to detach herself and opening up escalates inside her, and she tries even harder to detach herself from her parents, Emily, and Santana.

Four days remaining, Daelyn is forced to go to Santana's house after school because neither of her parents could pick her up. She finds out more about Santana's life through listening to the conversation between Santana and his mother Ariel. Daelyn feels guilty that she didn't consider how her death could possibly affect her parents, while Santana tries extremely hard to survive, because he is worried about abandoning his mother after his death.

Two days before the Date of Determination, Daelyn has to go to Santana's house again because her parents cannot pick her up. This time, it is only Santana and Daelyn at his house. Santana shows Daelyn a video that he has started filming since he was fourteen, the age he got his illness. The video, filmed daily at a certain time of the day, shows Santana going through chemotherapy, getting his hair shaved off, hurling in the toilet, moaning, sleeping, and sitting on the bench where Daelyn first met him. Daelyn's inner conflict reaches the climax while she watches the video. Having two days left until the suicide date, Daelyn is determined to kill herself. Yet, finding out about Santan's painful struggle for life, she feels extremely guilty that she has taken her life for granted. When the video ends, Santana holds Daelyn's hands and kisses her, but Daelyn leaves his house because she cannot handle the whole situation and her feelings. After she comes home, Daelyn chats with Santana and tells him how she has to wear her neck brace because she drank ammonia and bleach to kill herself.

One day remaining, Daelyn actually responds to Emily, which surprises her. She also kicks Taylor when she picks on her in the bathroom. After school, Daelyn actually talks to Santana, revealing that she was not mute. Santana asks Daelyn if she would like to have dinner with him on his birthday, which is the next day, the Date of Determination. At home, Through-

the-Light suddenly starts asking unusual questions such as “what choice do you have?” and “why are you here?”

On the Day of Determination, Daelyn deletes her account on Through-the-Light. She also finishes reading her book, in which Maggie Louise finally realizes that Charles is the only man she truly wants, after all those affairs with other men. Daelyn leaves her room when her dad calls her. With determination and purpose, Daelyn heads into the light.





## CHARACTER LIST

### **-Daelyn Rice-**

Daelyn Rice, the main protagonist in the novel, is experiencing a break through about her life. She is pondering between death and life, unable to be determined if she really wants to end everything. Although she has been obese in the past, as she came back from the fat camp, she lost a lot of weight at the same time losing herself. She now wears a neck bracelet due to past injuries she committed that clashed her vocal cords and esophagus. Although Daelyn does not consider her looks to be confident, Santana thinks that she is the most beautiful and mysterious girl he ever met.

### **-Santana Girard-**

Just like Daelyn, Santana is going through the life-death conflict. However, unlike Daelyn, Santana desperately wants to live because of his mother, Ariel. He is skinny and tall, with eyes that are deep, dark blue along with a shocking white hair. As he does not want to make Ariel be left alone and suffer because of his Hodgkin's lymphoma cancer, he tries everything that will make him fight back his beast inside, struggling against whatever it takes to stay alive. Unlike Daelyn, he is determined about his purpose in life, and he tries to support Daelyn in finding her way out of her past as well.

### **-Ariel-**

Although Ariel's mother is suffering from her son's cancer as a widow, she is always supportive of him, even willing to help him with his video memoirs. She never given up

her hopes against her son, and she tries everything that will help make Santana live. Her personality is warm and homey like a cinnamon, with a graying waist-long braid and fizzy bangs alongside her face. She is very passionate about saving her son, and also very straightforward about everything. It was even clear enough to Daelyn how Ariel needed her son.

#### **-Mr. Rice (Chip)-**

Chip has been a very pushy father to Daelyn throughout the past. As Daelyn showed interests in singing, Chip kept pushing her to audition, assuring her that she will become the next American Idol. He eventually was the one who hurt her in the beginning, starting to give pressure to Daelyn. He even went far enough to force her through an audition, embarrassing Daelyn in-front of everyone. However, after he finds out that his daughter has been attempting to commit suicide, he becomes over-protective than ever.

#### **-Mrs. Rice (Kim)-**

Although Kim does not mention it much to her daughter, she also had a similar childhood like Daelyn. These two characters are much alike, and they both do not want to talk about their problems to others. Just like Daelyn, Kim does not talk about her past and feelings to her as well, resulting in creating a wall between them. However, before the day of the determination, Kim finally open up to Daelyn.

#### **-JenniferJessicas-**

Daelyn categorizes all the mean girls she had encountered that bullied her throughout the past by calling them all JenniferJessicas. Daelyn seems to treat all these girls into one identity, avoiding to single out all of these girls. She also recalled that she is more scared to girls than boys due to her past experiences. The grouping of the names Jennifer and Jessica illustrates how Daelyn does not want to recognize them as individuals, making herself to perceive them as a whole, rather than a person.

### **-Emily-**

Emily is an example of how Daelyn used to be in the past, except that she is a more outgoing and optimistic person. She is short and obese, but has very distinguishable personality that is sparkling and high spirited unlike Daelyn. Emily is an overweighted outcast, just like how Daelyn used to be. Nevertheless, Daelyn feels intimidated by Emily's presence and tries to immediately block her away. Emily also plays a significant role in changing Daelyn back to herself. As Emily's energetic persona touched Daelyn's wound, Daelyn was able to look back into her past, making her more determined about herself and her future.

### **-Maggie Louise-**

Maggie Louise is one of the characters in *Desire in the Mist*, a book that Daelyn is constantly reading everyday. The love twist and attention Maggie Louise gets shadows Daelyn's desire to be wanted and loved by someone too. Maggie is like an icon, an idol that Daelyn wants to be. Daelyn desperately admires the love Maggie Louise gets, who is shifting

back and forward between other characters named Emilio and Charles. This secret yearning for intimacy shows how Daelyn still possesses a small amount of longing to live.



## MAJOR CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### **-Daelyn Rice-**

Daelyn Rice is having a mental breakdown as she is suffering from her past. She cannot move on forward because she never met someone who treated her with respect and love. With her miserable past in the Fat camp, and bullied memories in her previous schools, she is unable to cope with the situation and becomes determined to end her life. As Daelyn counts down the days to her appointed “Date of Determination,” she recalls the events that have led to her current state of despair and desperation. Daelyn, who is overweight, has been bullied her whole life, ranging from fat jokes to a sexual attack by a group of boys in a school bathroom. She has been physically and verbally abused at “fat camp,” made the object of cruel pranks at school, and ignored or pitied by teachers and school administrators

Although Daelyn wants to leave this world, she also does not want her parents to mourn over her death at the same time. Even when she criticizes them and tries to ‘detach’ herself from her parents, her feelings illustrate how she still cares and loves her family. She does not want them to be sorrowful over her own death. Daelyn also constantly forces herself to believe that she will go into peace if she comes peace with her own decision by committing suicide. She was extremely hurt to see her parents be upset due to her failed attempts. She is also unable to express her real feelings that seems to be wavering inside her mind back and forth. What her desire may be is that she just wants to stay here, be the person she used to be, and stay alongside with the ones she loves. Even while Daelyn keeps denying her growing attachment to Santana, she does not recognize her feelings quite well. As she is about to enter his house, she feels as if she were electrified at the touch of him. This portrays how Santana is playing a significant role in

changing her, developing her as a person. Although Daelyn tries to stop feeling her emotions, she is unable to avoid Santana's presence in herself. Even-though her mind is determined to think in a certain way, she is unable to deny what her mind is really feeling against Santana and her parents. However, as the novel progresses, she releases her protectorate and relaxes when she's starting to slowly open herself to others.

### **-Santana Girard-**

Santana is boy living next to Daelyn's Catholic school. He is always aware of his wary Lymphoma, and tries every way in order to live for his mother. Santana is 18 and has his own life trauma to deal with. Unlike Daelyn, he values his own life, and been through a more painful experience than Daelyn had. As he constantly saw Daelyn's suffering, he wanted to lead her to the light, showing her that she has the power to overcome her past and move on forward. He also is capturing his whole life through his video camera, making memoirs to give to his mother in case his cancer turns into a wrong way. He does not want his mother to be left alone, especially since they both lost their father in an accident when he was little. Hence, he feels more responsible to take care of his mother. He doesn't even mention his new lump on his back because he does not want to see his mother become more troubled and anxious about his future. Due to his presence, Daelyn was able to change her perspective on life, and how more valuable it is.



## IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS

1. *“ A person has no privacy anywhere. Ever since the first time I slit my wrists, I feel like Im always being watched. If I’m not looked at or sneered at or judged.” (48).*

### **Analysis**

After series of event had affected Daelyn’s life, she begins to doubt who she is and what she wants out of her life. She is perplexed into a deeper issue than a normal teen would experience. She feels like she is always constantly being watched, or observed by someone, always feeling forced and trapped. She always thinks that someone is determining her, giving her unwanted decisions without her opinion. This quote is significant since it shows how the protagonist feels about her life. Although it is clear that she wants to run away from everything, it some part of her mind, it seems that she wants to live too. Daelyn has been greatly mistreated during her childhood, where it determined her to block everyone and everything from herself. She is clinging to be an outsider so she feels content inside, where in-fact, she always feels lonely and out of place. She is simply needing someone who can give the love and approval she wants.

2. *“ My parents will be sad for a while, and may even blame themselves, the way try do now. Eventually they’ll come to peace with my decision. I hope they realize Im finally at peace” (160).*

### **Analysis**

As Daelyn visits Santan’s house because her parents were out, she struggles more between herself and how that she will leave her parents alone. She understands that Ariel,

Santana's mother, needs him since he is everything she has. However, Daelyn does not think that she's an important part in her parent's heart as well. She almost feels as if they were the ones who isolated her, who made her to become like this. Although Daelyn wants to leave this world, she also does not want her parents to mourn over her death. Even when she criticizes them and tries to 'detach' herself from her parents, this feeling illustrates how she still cares and loves her family. She does not want them to be sorrowful over her own death. Daelyn also constantly forces herself to believe that she will go into peace if she comes peace with her own decision. She is unable to express her real feelings that seems to be wavering inside her mind back and forth. What her desire may be is that she just wants to stay here, be the person she used to be, and stay alongside with the ones she loves.

3. *" I close my eyes. I remember this one time we went to the ocean, just Mom and me. We played on the warm beach. We built castles with moats, and I buried Mom in the sand up to her neck and she called out, Help, help. Just kidding around. That snaps me back and forth between past and present. We played until the tide came in Then all the memories sep up from the grave where I thought I'd buried them" (149).*

## **Analysis**

As Daelyn and her mother visits the museum to go to the exhibition of the Amish quilts, her mother suddenly breaks down and starts to cry. Although Daelyn wants to express her emotions and tell that to her, she is unable to cope all her feelings and show it to her mother, since that will show underlying desire. Even-though Daelyn is struggling against her own emotions, she comes to a conclusion that she does not want to trouble her parents in doing so, so that they will be able to understand her. The quote signifies that as she takes some time alone



together with her mother, how important and luring her past memories have become to her. She constantly re-experiences the memory where she is on the beach with her mother, peaceful and glowing. Although Daelyn continuously claims that she wants to end her life and find peace in herself, her inner self seems not to. Her true-self wants to work things out with her family, and once again become the joyful person she used to be, ignorant of her failures and misery.

4. “ *Boys are not girl’s friends. I’ve never known one boy who only wanted to be friends with a girl. Mom’s right about them being dangerous... Your failures and your faults, they stick with you. They glob into ugly, cancerous growths inside you and make you want to die*” (36,40).

### **Analysis**

As the mysterious boy keeps talking to her, Daeyln falls into a deep confusion where she questions her existence. She never had gotten attention from a boy and does not know whether the feeling she is having is good or bad. However, it is true that she is scared to bond and let the boy inside her life. As her relationship with the boy goes into more depth, she is having difficulty that the fact that someone is trying to understand her. She never expected this to happen, and it strikes Daelyn like the first time she went on stage and failed. However, in some part of her heart it seems that she desires to know him, and give a chance to life. Continuing on, Daelyn keeps struggling with finding herself and relation with other people. She does not know how to cope with her fears and stress while she plans to end her life. She assures herself on and on how that her failures will never disappear and will always follow her, and that death is the only solution to run away from reality. She compels herself that her history with faults will constantly strangle her until everything is gone.

5. “ *I don’t know why I can’t let the insults go, but I can’t. Im the product of every hurt that’s ever been laid on me. Human waste product. Dispose of it...*” (27).

### **Analysis**

Daelyn is very dreadful about her life and does not know how to move on forward. That’s why turns to rely on the website through-the-light where she becomes slowly determines to commit suicide. She has been confused about her identity constantly and is struggling to overcome her problem. She feels like she lacks attention and love and does not want to have any companion at all. She forces herself to be isolated, and treat herself like a trash. This quote is significant since it illustrates where Daelyn believes she stands. She feels hopeless and useless about herself and continuously kills herself with her own words. She does not believe that she can change, and lies a struggle that the protagonist has to endure. Throughout the book I believe that this view towards her own-self will develop somehow and differentiate with her previous perspective.

6. “ *When I look at myself in the mirror, all I see is a starving, stunted bird who never grew wings and lost all reason to sing...I stick the Mini Me into my book bag and shut the door behind me. Its time. With determination and purpose, I head into the light*” (200).

### **Analysis**

At the day of the determination, Daelyn finally puts herself together in order to make her final decision. Although the author did not directly illustrate how Daelyn made her choice, it was clear that she was confident and molded to do so. Daelyn wants to leave behind her ugly past

into history, and start a new life that will change her into the person she wants to be. She wants to clear out her dreadful memories with a clean slate, leaving her conflicts and struggles in the past. The Mini Me also signifies how she will not give up on Santana, and even her own life. Shutting the door behind her also symbolizes her desire to throw away all her old self and start a new beginning. As determined she was, she will be heading through the light as she always wanted to, except that this time, the light will mean a new start, a new viability that she can control.



## THEMES

### -Life-

*By the Time You Read This, I'll Be Dead* mainly revolves around the idea of life and death as Daelyn scrambles with the thought of committing suicide. Life to her is the manifestation of pain and suffering, as she drowns herself in the past of her self pity. However Life, as depicted by Julie Anne Peters, is quite the antipode of Daelyn's conviction. Life is used to represent the death of one's old self and the act of moving beyond one's past. Throughout the novel, Daelyn constantly recollects the pieces of her past, brooding over her forlorn life. Julie Anne Peters turns this around as a change come upon Daelyn's character.

*"My mouth opens and my tongue presses against the top of my palate and the word opens my throat. It takes will and rage to force sound from my scarred and melted vocal cords, but I do it. I say, 'No. Don't. Go, '"* (Peters 190).

The old Daelyn would never have concerned herself over the problems of others, let alone go out of her way to speak in desperation of the situation. At this moment, she gets over herself and acts to protect Emily. Making room to consider others, she sheds her previously neglected disposition, and says no to being an onlooker of life.

*"What choice do you have? Begin or end,"* (199).

Daelyn comes to realize that she is not left with no choice, as she had originally thought. She does have a choice, and it is up for her to decide whether she will start anew or end all the opportunities that are laid out for her. In the end Julie Anne Peters has her choose the new beginning, to live again with a different attitude towards life and all it that it holds. In the moment she made her decision, she had become like a newly born infant, given life to live again. Life is not always defined by physical existence, but the will to live and love.

Life also constitutes the image of light, the revelation to one's identity and purpose. The realization of reason provides light to those lost in the dark. As the days progress, Daelyn not only searches for the ideal method of death, but also for a purpose in which she may continue to live. When someone feels as though their existence is pointless, they lose their motivation to try living. It is also true for one's identity; when at loss of who they are, people tend to be rendered lifeless, killing themselves on the inside. So within the twenty-three days she manages to take a life's journey with the help of Santana and others around her, in search for answers.

*"His invitation lingers. So does my question. Why me? I don't know the answer. When I look at myself in the mirror, all I see is a starving, stunted bird who never grew wings and lost all reason to sing," (200).*

She still continues to ask herself the questions of life, but has set a goal to figure things out for herself. Life is all about searching for answers to questions finding out new things about oneself along the way. Thanks to the persistent people that surround her, she was able to see that

her uniqueness was part of her, and therefore a part of her life. It is factor that she must embrace to live and allow herself to accept others. Life is not lived alone, rather it is shared with others.

### **-Love-**

Love is a necessary emotion in life because it connects one with the other people in their life. It is a fundamental emotion that people inherently desire to feel. Just like everyone else, Daelyn also finds herself compelled to those that express love and interest in her. Santana is the best example in this case because he lures feelings out of Daelyn who had originally seemed so inexpressive. The most important thing to note however, is that Daelyn has never fully been emotionless. She had simply accustomed herself to hide and restrain from having any emotions whatsoever. There had to be emotions within her from the start for the others to be able to pull it out. They cannot build on something nonexistent.

*“Wasn’t it enough that we had been shamed into being there?” (144).*

All her problems had originally been caused by the lack of love she felt from everyone around her. She therefore gives up on ever being accepted into her social institutions. Then forms the self hatred, which keeps her from accepting herself. Usually love equates itself with acceptance, and when she fails to love herself, it keeps others from easily accepting her as well.

Everyone shows their love in their own unique ways, which can cause misunderstanding at times, but will prevail in its persistence. Daelyn had been oblivious until later on in the novel,

to the love that she had always received, the love from her parents. They try hard to understand her and provide her with what she wants, but as humans they cannot help but show weakness. Yet as imperfect as they are, they do everything within their power to express their affections towards Daelyn. Love should not be based on conditions or looks, but this is the sort of love Daelyn seeks. The kind of love that is not as important, acceptance from her peers that have always only bullied her. Those whose love really counts, she fails to take notice, as she continues to drown in her own self pity.

*“If I open the note, it means I care. I can’t care. Not now,” (65).*

To be loved is what everybody wants, whether its Daelyn or the fellow j\_does on the through-the-light website. Therefore, despite her attempts to try detaching herself to all the people in her life, when shown kindness, she is unable to turn back. These actions of love bring hope to those who lack it most. Once she starts opening up however, she is able to realize her own feelings towards her parents, Emily, and Santana. Love manifests itself in the lives of each person, whether they like it or not.



## SYMBOLS

### **-Through-the-light-**

Through-the-light is a suicide help website in *By the Time You Read This, I'll Be Dead*. Daelyn finds this online site which guarantees the privacy of its users, some time after her second attempted suicide. She first enters this site in an attempt to confirm her death through her next suicidal attempt. On this website everyone's id is j\_doe, virtually making everyone the same. Forums are provided in which users can share their experiences with various life problems such as bullying or sexual abuse. Twenty-three days are given to each user after their registration, in which they are expected to prepare their method of suicide. DOD, the day of determination, lists the ids of members who supposedly successfully committed suicide at the end of their twenty-three day time period.

*"Are you ready to pass Through-the-Light?" (7).*

The site's name, at first makes one believe that the word light symbolizes the light that supposedly people see once they're dead. Therefore, passing through the light would mean to die and move on to the after life. However, as the plot continues and Daelyn's interaction on the website increases, the symbolic meaning of Through-the-Light is revealed. Walking through the light can definitely symbolize death, but light also symbolizes life. Therefore making this name mean the complete opposite of what the site had been created for. Through-the-Light is a website structured to look like a suicide help site, but its actual purpose is to revert people back onto the path of life. The word light itself can be interpreted both ways. In the case that it is seen to



symbolize death, it foreshadows the death of the old self, leading room for the birth of a new self. So Daelyn and all the other people, enter this site expecting for them to support their decision to die, just to find themselves being persuaded out of it without them knowing.

*“How will you get to the light?”* (114).

*“What awaits you?”* (123).

After a while of leaving stories on the forum, Daelyn is faced with several questions. She cannot move on to any section of the site without having answered these inquiries. She doesn't think much of them at first, but these questions were meant to provoke thought. “How will you get to the light?” is asking Daelyn how she will save herself from the act of suicide. How she will avert herself from going down that path and turning to face life. “What awaits you?” has Daelyn thinking about the purpose of her life and the things she must accomplish. It asks her to ponder and form a reason for which she must live, because once she does so, she will no longer have the will to die. Although it may seem as though it is referring to the afterlife, these questions indirectly get people thinking. They eventually begin to have second thoughts about committing suicide, and when revelation comes to them, they place their original plans behind, to live their lives.

### **-Maggie Louise-**

Maggie Louise is the main character in a series of books that Daelyn reads throughout the plot. She normally reads while sitting on the bench right outside her school as she waits for either

one of her parents to come and pick her up. Maggie Louise is a well loved girl, who has men at all sides. The books are a romantic series, dealing with the back and forth love between Maggie Louise, Charles, and Emilio. Not much story plot is revealed to the readers, only excerpts long enough to identify the love affairs that Maggie is currently having.

*“Charles removed a suitcase from the closet shelf and opened it onto the bed. Maggie Louise watched from their bedroom door. Their bedroom, where they’d slept and talked long into the night and made love to the sounds of the city,” (19).*

Maggie Louise can be seen as the complete opposite of Daelyn’s character. She is beautiful, well loved, and seems to be happy. She loves life, and looks forward to the things that she will experience in life. She is loved by several men, all madly in love with her, and despite her flirtatious nature, they all desire to remain by her. Maggie Louise symbolizes the very desires that Daelyn has deep within her closed heart. She wants to be like Maggie Louise, to be loved by many and to essentially find happiness and purpose. She may not realize it as she reads the four novels, but this is what compels Daelyn to Maggie. Maggie’s character paints a picture of what Daelyn had wished to become. When she reads this, she becomes a step closer to that ideal life style.

*“If only I knew where Maggie Louise got her power, her confidence. The only power I have over people is to leave them behind. And spurn advances,” (61).*

It is not just a coincidence that Daelyn finds herself always reading this book in the presence of Santana. Every day after school, the two meet on the bench, where Daelyn will read while Santana tries to persistently communicate. Santana is the first person she eventually accepts into her life, and the first person she will turn to love. When Daelyn is with Santana, she is closer to the character of Maggie Louise than at any other time. She is sought after by a man who loves her and makes her feel special. Maggie Louise's character not only symbolizes Daelyn's desire, but also foreshadows Sanatana's role in her life.



## CHAPTER SUMMARIES

### -23 days -

A white, skinny, and tall boy with shocking white hair lean against the tree trunk. Daelyn, the main character, watches him out of the corner of her eyes. She pulls out a book and starts reading. She tries to concentrate on her book. She sees her mom's car coming. She rips out the page she was just reading, crumples it in her hand, and stands. The boy watches her but she doesn't make any eye contact. She rides the car. Inside the car, her mom, Kim, asks who the boy is and she tells her not to associate with people outside of school. But Daelyn doesn't respond to neither her question nor her command. She just thinks to herself. Kim tells her that she is leaving to Houston for her work. And she tells her that she needs to stop for deodorant and toothpaste at Wal-Mart, but she decides to go home because Daelyn thinks that her mom is afraid of her having another whack attack again. When she was ten, her mom left her in the car to grab a few groceries at King Scoopers, but as the door was shut, she felt like she couldn't breath, and she had to go to the bathroom. She peed her pants and was afraid of being locked inside. People surrounded the car and her mom eventually came. Daelyn felt like she humiliated her mom. Now, she is under twenty-four-hour suicide watch.

### - 22 days -

Daelyn accidently finds a website called Through-the-Light. A message pops up from the site: *are you ready to pass Through-the-Light?* She clicks *yes*. A message pops up again: *By agreeing to the terms of this site, you release Through-the-Light of all responsibility for your actions.* She clicks *yes*. Another message pops up: *do you agree to the minimum and maximum time limits?* She clicks *yes*. Her ID is J\_Doe071894, which she thought was weird because her

birthday is July 18, 1994. Another message pops up: *Your Date of Determination will be 23 days from today. Will you be prepared?* She thinks that the date was too long, she wanted to kill herself tomorrow, so she types tomorrow's date but it came back as an invalid entry. She feels that somehow the site has found her and knew about her true desire. April 24 is her earliest possible Date of Determination.

The white boy is wearing a green shirt with cream khakis. She pulls out her book and reads silently. The boy hip-hop dances in front of her and she thinks he is bad at it, and she wants him to leave her alone. She starts reading again. Her dad arrived to pick her up, she rips out page 181 crumples it in her fist.

Next day at her school, while she is in the bathroom stall changing her tampon, two Catholic girls are smoking. She flushes the toilet and the girls yelp. The girls find out that it was Daelyn not a teacher so they tell her not to rat them out. And one girl tells the other girl that she cannot talk. At the ride back home, her dad tells her that her mom will be back by Friday and if it is okay to order takeout. She thinks that the restriction on her 24/7 suicide watch have been relaxed since her last failure. At home, Daelyn food is liquified in the blender because she can no longer eat "real food" (Peters,14).

Daelyn reflects back when she could talk, her dad suggested her to try an audition for singing since she is good at it. But when she did the audition she was told by the judges that she has a beautiful voice but she could not be qualified because she is overweight. Since then she never trusted her dad.

**-21 days-**

The site only needs a fingerprint match to sign on. She writes stories about how people verbally assaulted her and how adults don't care about it. She thinks that people on the boards are always sympathetic but she knows that they don't really care about her because they are using the site for their need. She has been to other board which say stuff like "Don't do it. Suicide is not the answer" (16). However this board doesn't say it and she feels comforting. The Final Forum has a long list of topics, including: Random Rant, Bullied, Divorce, Disease, So Tired, Hate This Life, Bleak, Bequest, Attempts. She likes the site and starts with Random Rants. She reads about the topic Bullied. Someone wrote that people have no right to hurt another human being.

Her dad drops her off at the school. She thinks that no one tries to engage her all morning, which isn't unusual. Her economy teacher smiles at her because she has to since she is a nun. She thinks it is obvious by the way her teachers avoid her because her parents had told the principal about her problem. After school, the green boy pops down next to her on the bench. She wants him to go away. He introduces himself as Santana. She backs away even more. She gets out the novel, *Desire in the Mist*, from her book bag. He tells her that he lives in the house next door and sees her come at the bench after school everyday. She hunches even more and concentrates hard on her novel. He confesses that he is a stalker, not a strangler. She can see that he is looking at her neck brace. She only wishes he would go away. He tells her that he read the book for comparative lit last year. She thinks that he is a total "loser" if he is talking to her. She thinks that he is "semi-attractive, in a nerdy way" (21). And concludes that all the boys are all alike. She waits for her parents to come and get her. He tells her that he is addicted to the Weather Channel. He keeps talking to her even though she doesn't respond to him.

At dinner, Daelyn's dad apologizes for spacing her schedule and says that he hoped she didn't panic. She thinks that her dad hates even more than her mom when she has a whack attack. She once started to panic and hyperventilate when so many people were rushing in the elevator. She goes to her room and logs on to Through-the-light. She reads some methods of suicide and she thinks that she has twenty-one more days to remove every trace of her existence.

**-20 days-**

No one calls her "fat ass" or "lard butt" at the school she is attending. Back in second grade, she was called as "Goopy mass," or "Poker," or "Blubber belly." She thinks that she is the "product of every hurt that's ever been laid on" her (27).

He wasn't there when she exited the gate. She thinks why he isn't in school. She thinks that it is a relief that he is not here because she needs to be alone emotionally and physically. Suddenly, he pops up from nowhere. She wanted to scream if she could. Her mom arrives and she leaves the bench. At home, she logs on to the site and sees that there are 318 people logged on to the site. And she recalls the moment when she woke up in the hospital after her suicide attempt. Her parents were crying and she thinks that she has ruined their day. She promises herself not to fail anymore.

**-19 days, 18 days- (This is one chapter)**

Saturday morning her parents try to engage themselves with Daelyn by asking her out to a movie. She doesn't answer them and they give up. When she was nine, her mom asked her if she wants to be in Girl Scout, but she says no to her mom because, she thinks, all the girls are mean to her. Her mom made her to go to the meeting, at the meeting her mom left her at stranger's house with all those girls who already knew each other. The leader made the troop do

a ceremonial welcome bridge and more than one girl tried to trip her. She thought the meeting was pointless. A girl from her school came up to Daelyn and told her, “you’ll like this part, Daelyn. Its where we eat” (31). She locked herself in the bathroom until her mom came. In the car her mom accused of her for not even trying to interact with them. Daelyn thought in her mom’s eyes, she was a failure.

She has to keep her bedroom door opened while is she online. Her dad removed all the locks when they first moved in here. She logs on to the site reads the forums. A topic of “Bullycide” came up, she thinks that she knows this word well because it means suicide as an escape. She writes about her own experience at her old school, when she was called fat. A girl said that she wouldn’t even fit on the swing at the playground. She told her parents that she didn’t want to go to school and her parents told her that they need to work which makes impossible for them to provide homeschool for her. She thought they cared more about work then her. Her mom walks into her room, and she raises her hand to cover the screen to go dark. Her mom asks her if she is okay, she doesn’t answer her because she can’t talk. Her mom looks around her room and tell her that today is the day for Daelyn to meet Dr. Novotny. He is their fourth or fifth family therapist. She doubts his ability to help her because she knows that no one can change the past. At Sunday brunch, mom asks if she wants to go to Tiny Town, but Daelyn thinks that she doesn’t want to go. As they head to Tiny Town, her mom talks about her experience at her high school. She had a tryout with Bonnie, her highs school friend, and they were the only group one partner didn’t make the tryout. Her mom did not make the team while her friend did. The trip was a total waste because Tiny Town is closed until summer. Daelyn



thinks that her mom knew this whole time because while they were away her dad, Chip, was busy at home installing a network to link his computer to her computer.

**-17 days-**

Daelyn sees Santana on the bench reading a forecast from his laptop. She sits on the bench and starts reading her book. She smells licorice on his breath. He shows her a pet rat and she screams inside. The mouse's name is Hervé Villechaize. He tells her that his brother rat, Harvey, just passed away. She jumps back because she is disgusted by the mouse. She thinks that he is so weird and rats are filth. He asks her if she is afraid of rats and tells her to pet him. But he eventually backs away realizing that she is actually afraid of rats. She writes on a piece of paper that she hates rats. She thinks that he is a dork. He tells her that there is no reason to fear rats. Her mom's CR-V turns the corner and she leaps to her feet. Her mom asks if he is bothering her again. He comes up to the car and knocks on the window. He introduces himself and the rat to her mom. At home, she reads about carbon monoxide poisoning and its effectiveness, time, availability, and pain on the site. Also she reads about jumping off a building but she doesn't consider that as her option because there isn't any tall building. She hears a sound down the hall and thinks that her dad might be spying on her. She thinks that she has no privacy anywhere ever since she slit her wrists. She feels like she is always being watched. She thinks that she is going to die at home for sure because she doesn't want her body to be lost or mutilated so badly that her parents can't recognize her.

**-16 days-**

There is a chorus rehearsal before school. Her mom doesn't understand why she signed up for choral performance. Daelyn thinks that standing there pretending to belong is part of her punishment. The other girls in the group stare at her and call her the weird girl, the freak.

After school, Santana is again sitting on the bench in her spot. Santana says "the beautiful mystery girl returns" (50). She writes on her notebook "get off my bench" (50). They argue about the property right of the bench. Santana says that bench is his because he saw the bench first however he tells her that he is willing to share. She swallows and it hurts her throat. The operation to repair her esophagus was a nightmare, she recalls. She starts reading her book but she can't focus because of Santana. He read the book before and he tells her that the main character doesn't exactly redeem herself at the end. He scoots closer to her and she edges away. He suggests her if they could IM. And when he was just about to tell her his screen name her mom arrived. He introduces himself to Daelyn's mom and her mom introduce herself to him. On the way home, her mom says that he seems nice and tell her that she doesn't need her approval for choosing her friend. But Daelyn thinks that she doesn't choose friend which works out great because they don't choose her.

#### **-15 days-**

In fourth grade, a girl from her school invited Daelyn to her birthday party. She was so excited because she has never been to a birthday party before. She was told that the party was on Saturday one o'clock. Across the street from the girl's house, she saw a curtain move, then a face, two faces in the upstairs window. Behind the window a bunch of girls were pointing and laughing at her. She tells her mom that it was a mistake to come here. The closest she came to having a real friend was in middle school. She was a new girl and so was Daelyn. She never

learned her name, but she would know her face if she saw her again. During lunch the girl sat next to her and she was close to having tears for sharing her company.

She decides to begin detachment procedures by referring her parents by their names instead of mom and dad. Chip and Kim are arguing about money issue, Daelyn thinks that they didn't have to buy her a new computer and didn't have to pay for a therapist or send her to the private school. She looks around her bathroom how she can't have razors or electric appliance in the bathroom. Kim even put a safety plug on the outlet. She goes to the kitchen, Chip sets a glass of water at her place with two pills and she takes the pill. Daelyn doesn't feel like eating her breakfast, but her mom worries that she might become anorexic, so she forcefully eats her oatmeal.

She has a test in economy today. However she doesn't think GPA is crucial to her. After school, she sees Santana again. He talks to her but she takes out her book and starts reading. He gives her an apology note that he didn't know she couldn't talk. He writes another note asking for correct spelling of her name. Kim comes and he says hello to him. On their way home, Kim comments that he is cute and asks for his name.

Her second grade teacher told her parents that she was hypersensitive that she cried over nothing. She remembers that no one wanted to sit next to her because they said she smelled. One day, after coming to class from gym, everyone sat down and there was loud farting sound. People laughed and pointed at her. A boy had put a whoopee cushion on her seat. Back then in second grade she felt like it was like a defining moment in her life.

**-14 days-**

She can't go to sleep, so she logs on to Through-the-Light. She touches *Final Forum* - she has a touch screen computer - and writes about people at her old school. One boy brought a knife to school and had a wack attack on the playground, he was expelled and she heard a rumor that he moved, then killed himself. She writes about a girl who was a cutter since the age of 10. She powers down her computer as she heard the alarm buzzing. She sees a note from Santana which said "IM me" but she doesn't have the courage to IM him because of her past memory when people wrote nasty, hurtful messages to her. At school, she gets a D- on her econ test. A girl who was sitting next to Daelyn draws a line on Daelyn's paper and makes the grade to A-. After school, she sees Santana on the bench.

### **-13 days-**

She tries to throw away anything that will leave memory to their parents. She doesn't throw all her belonging at once because she doesn't want her parents noticing her plan. She is in a slow process of erasing her past. At school, she has a rehearsal for the May Concert. She can't sing due to her neck injury. A girl who Daelyn refers to as "JenniferJessica" keeps pushing Daelyn, she ended up moving her spot next to a chubby girl who is really nice to her. After school, she doesn't see Santana on the bench, she reads the book until her mom comes. At home, she logs on to the site again. As she was looking at the site, Chip, her dad, comes in and checks on her daughter. She lies to him that she is working on her English homework. She reads the list of suicidal method. Chip comes in again and ask if he could check something on her computer and shares a file with his own computer. At night, she couldn't go to sleep, so she logs on the site again, and reads the suicidal methods again. She recalls a memory about her painful IM

experience, and she promised herself not to IM anyone anymore. However she IMs Santana asking if she could borrow one of his laptop. There is no response.

### **-12 days, 11 days- (This is one chapter)**

She thinks to herself how she was called as “Big fat farting pig”, “Fatso. Lardo. Chubette”, and “Blimper. Heifer. Fudge pudger” (88). The more she heard, the more she ate, changing school did not help. She thinks her parents would be embarrassed because she is a sick, fat, psychotic creation. She reads about the effectiveness, time, availability, and pain of self-immolation and drowning on the site. The effectiveness of self-immolation is three to four, the time is about second to days, availability is two to three, and pain is five. She thinks that she doesn’t want any dramatic suicide. The effectiveness of drowning is three to four, it takes about five minutes to die of drowning and 20 minutes to die of hypothermia. The availability is one and pain is one. Even though drowning is frightening, she decides to drown herself because for once in her life, she thinks she is beautiful under water.

### **-10 days -**

Daelyn is glad that Santana was not on the bench, but he shows up with stack of laptops. He helps Daelyn choose the laptop by explaining the pros and cons about each laptop. She writes to him that she will pay him 5 dollars per day using his laptop. He tells that he doesn’t want her money but he just wants her to IM him. He tells her that JenniferJessica reminds him of Maggie Louise, the main character from *Desire on the Moor*; Daelyn thinks that JenniferJessica is not his type. Kim, her mom, arrives and she leaves the bench. She uses the laptop at home to go on the site. As she reads a entry about a girl who was raped, she thinks about her own time when she was almost raped by the boys at her old school. One of boys was her crush. One of the boys told

the principle that Daelyn has been creeping in the boy's bathroom. She denied it and told him that she was just bullied. She couldn't say who did it and what exactly happened. And her mom said they are just teasing her because they liked her and she told her not to tell her dad because he would only make a fuss about it. An IM from Santana pops up, but she just powers down the laptop.

**-9 days-**

Santana was waiting for her at the gate, which he has never done before. He demands back his laptop if she is not going to communicate with him. He says that his last friend moved to Germany and everyone else lives out of state. He asks why she needs the laptop for ten days and if she has gotten his IM. He tells her that he has Hodgkin's lymphoma and that he has found a lump. She thinks he is a liar.

At home, she writes down a note saying if she can take a walk and hands it to Kim. She reads the note and says where. Daelyn doesn't answer her so she says that she will follow her. Daelyn checks the clock before she leaves the house. She believes that timing is everything. She walks to her school and her mom follows her with her car. Kim asks for the destination but she doesn't answer. She finally sees the school and a voice carries across the street. Santana asks her why she is here. She hacks a dry cough. She gets into the car and heads home again. Right before she left, Santana says that she should eat more.

She thinks she is not skinny but not fat anymore. She navigates to the final forum, to *Bullied*. In fifth grade, somebody locked her in the janitor's room. Eight hours later, she was finally discovered and rescued. She peed her pants and her dad noticed that and said "you're wet. She's all wet" (112). She thinks that he was trying to announce to the world that she peed her

pants. She thinks that by the time she was ten she already knew her destiny. By middle school she had a plan for escape.

**-8 days-**

A question appears on her monitor “How will you get to the light?” She keys in drowning (114). At breakfast, Chip says that the new laptop is password-protected and asks her for the password. She gives him the password but she knows that he is not able to get her because she is fingerprint protected. After school, Santana is lying on the bench. When Daelyn approaches the bench, he asks if she has seen the fogbow this morning. She sits and read the book. He tells her about her mom, Ariel, who works at On the Border. At home, she thinks about him that he is dorky yet funny. She thinks the possibility that he might lying about his cancer.

She thinks that girls scare her more than boys because boys are cruel while girls are mean. Once during an art class, a girl drew Daelyn a hideous blob with bandages on both wrists.

At home she logs on the site and she writes about her experience at fat camp. She went from 5’ 0” to 5’ 2” and lost 50 more pounds. Someone on the site asks where the fat camp is located. She answers, in Arizona. She thinks that losing weight doesn’t really matter because she was a loser from birth. She reads more suicidal methods

**-7 days-**

Beside Daelyn, Emily is barely singing. Emily tells her that she is a terrible singer and she only took chorus because the other elective at this time was field hockey. Daelyn thinks that she is fat and thinks that they could be friends in another life. After school, rain is pouring hard. She goes to the bench and Santana drags her to the porch of his house. She tries to head back to

the bench, but Santana stops her and says don't be stupid. He says that she is impenetrable. He grabs her wrist, sees her scar, asks her when she do it, and if she was scared while doing it.

Kim's car arrives and she leaves the porch. At home, she searches about Hodgkin's lymphoma. It says that about 1320 people are expected to pass away from the disease this year. She wonders why she couldn't have a fatal disease and die easily.

#### **-6 days-**

Kim wakes her up telling her that she is going to be late. She thinks that she once dreamed herself in a grave. At the school's chapel, she thinks about how Santana was the first person to ask about her scar. She knows that people stare at her scar. They avoid her because they think she is contagious. She walks to economy class and Emily follows her. She thinks that Emily should stop trying to interact with her. She thinks about Santana if having a cancer hurts because he doesn't seem to be suffering. After school, he is on the bench and he seems kind of different. He shows her the lump on his neck and that he is already on chemo. He tells her that he'll probably need high-dose chemo and stem cell transplantation this time. He doesn't want to tell Ariel because she is already in hyper mode about the relapse. She writes down what is chemo like. He says that it is an indescribable horror. At home, Daelyn gets a phone call from Santana. He tells her to tap once for yes and no for twice. He was wondering if she could have dinner with him on his 18th birthday. She hangs up the phone.

#### **-5 days-**

She decides to tell all of it to the site. She logs on and links to *Bullied*. She confesses about the Fat camp she went. It was located in a place in Arizona, in the desert. There were supposed to be fun activities like horseback riding and swimming and crafts. She was excited to



go there. The whole time she was there, she never saw a horse, the pool was dried-up sinkhole, and the counselors were college students or dropouts. As soon as her parents left the torture began. They had to line up for their first weigh-in. She describes that it was humiliating because the trailers called them by their weight instead of their names. They had exercises morning, noon, and night. They had to do calisthenics, jumping jacks, and sit ups. Breakfast was like a bowl of oatmeal, watered-down orange juice, and a dry slice of toast. They got to call home every other day. She remembers this one call when she talked to her mom. A counselor sat in on all the conversations to listen and glare at you if you said anything negative. Once she cried while talking to her mom on the phone and the counselor took the phone away from her and lied to her parents that she was just having some difficult time. She powers down the computer.

#### **-5 days- (There are two chapters of “5 days”)**

She feels light today and she logs on the website. The site tells her that she still has 5 *days* to. She accuses her dad for the happening but she knows that her dad doesn't have a access to the site. Kim pops her head in Daelyn's room and asks her to go to museum with her. Apparently there is an exhibition of Amish quilts Kim's been dying to see because she used to quilt with her mom. According to Daelyn, Kim never talks about her childhood. Her grandparents died before she was born. They to the quilting museum. As she is standing in the museum wondering why these quilts are on a wall instead of someone's bed keeping them warm, Kim stumbles backward and plops on a bench. She presses her fingers into her eyelids. Daelyn hates when her mom cries because she cannot do anything. Kim leans on to her. Daelyn tries to hold herself from not crying but eventually she cries a bit.

#### **-4 days-**

The count restarted. Kim shatters her cherry mood at breakfast. She apologizes to Daelyn because Kim and Chip can't pick her up after school. And she tells her that she has asked Santana's mom to supervise her and Santana has also promised to stay with her. Daelyn gets upset because she can't allow attachment with anyone anymore. Kim tells her that she can tell that he like her a lot. At school, Daelyn notices that Emily is absent. After school, she sees Santana and his mom, Ariel, waiting for her at the gate. Ariel says hello. Santana grabs her book bag and they walk to their house. Ariel tells her that he has told her so much about her. He gets embarrassed. At his house, she looks around the house and she feels like a home. Santana tells her that she is painting the ceiling. At the dinner table, Santana demands that he wants a dog for his birthday party to his mom. But Ariel says no. In response, Santana says that she is only refusing to get him a dog is because he will die and she will end up having to take care of his dog and he adds that his father would have gotten him a dog. Ariel tells Daelyn that his dad was killed instantly in a rock slide when a boulder crushed his car. Ariel changes the topic by asking Daelyn if she was born mute. He tells Ariel not to be rude and tell her to finish her art work she has to do. Ariel in hurry stands up from the chair and goes to work. When Ariel leaves for work, Daelyn takes out her homework and pretends doing it because she doesn't want to be interacting with Santana.

### **-3 days-**

Chip suggests Daelyn to take a drive with him or go to the zoo. But Daelyn writes on a notepad saying that she has a lot of homework and that her story for English is due this week. She goes to her room and logs on to the site. There are two questions waiting for her on the site. The questions are "who becomes you?," and "what choice do you have?" (161). She reads the

question again and thinks. She keys in “no one” and the answer is accepted. And she keys in “do we have a choice,” for the second question, but answer does not get accepted (162). She thinks again and keys in “None. Not for me,” the answers get accepted (162). She opens the Final Forum and read her last entry. Someone commented on her entry that bullies are everywhere, at school, home, work, camp and that you can’t get away from them. However, Daelyn thinks that the person is wrong. She continues to write about her experience at fat camp. She was singled out again at the camp because she was not losing weight fast enough. She was starving the whole time because she had to exercise extra harder since her weight wasn’t going anywhere.

### **-2 days-**

Chip tells Daelyn that Kim is flying to Kansas because of her work, so he is going to drop her at her school. Kim apologies to her about her business trip and tells her that they should redecorate her room when she gets back from the trip and she adds that Santana said he would prepare the “den of iniquity” since she is staying at his house again. After school, he is waiting at the gate, not with his mother this time. He tells her that Ariel is working so he hopes she doesn’t have much homework today because he wants to show her something. He seems taller and different and he makes her feel all jiggly inside, but she reject the feelings. He tells her that she looks like she had a bad day. He takes her hand and walks to his house. They eat ordered pizza. He asks if she is a Catholic because she goes to a Catholic school. He says that he is a pantheist who believe God is in all things. He tells her that he found two more lumps under his arm. He told Ariel this morning and she flipped. They watch a video Santana made, the video is about Santana’s life. He introduces his mom and his dad who died before he was born. In the video,

his first lymphangiogram, his chest x-ray, CT scan, PET scan, and gallium scan are shown. He is diagnosed as Hodgkin's disease. October 21, 2007, he begins chemotherapy, the camera pans to Ariel. Someone else is filming the video because Santana is in a chair an IV stuck in his arm. The film stops, he tells her that the bench is made out of the rock that killed his father, and she her stomach wrenches, she thinks that she has invaded his personal space, not him. The film continues and it shows Ariel shaving Santana's hair. He fast forwards the film and the film ends. He kisses her. She is surprised, grabs a pencil on the table and stabs him. The door bell rings and she runs out the room. At her house, he IMs her saying he is very sorry. He didn't want to pressure her into anything but it just happened. He wanted to know about what happened to her neck. She tells him that she drank ammonia and bleach so she could die.

**-1 day-**

A boy died at camp, so her parents got called to come pick her up. She heard that the boy had a heart attack from too much physical exercise. She powers down the computer, and shuts her eyes. The image of Santana keeps reappearing in her mind. The last frame of film, his swollen cheeks and sunken eyes, lingers in her mind. Chip knocks on her door and asks her if she is ready to go. He waits her in the kitchen with her cereal and pills. She tongues the pills and when he turns around, spits them into her hand. He tells her that Kim wouldn't be home until friday. Her heart pounds because she won't be seeing her mother again. On the way to school, she is still shocked because she will never see her mother again since the day of her determination is tomorrow. Chip tells her that Chip and Kim were told that they couldn't have children, so she was a miracle baby. And he wants her to grow up, get married, and have lots of kids.

Emily is waiting for her at the chapel. She asks if she has studied for economy and tells her she is always nervous before a big test. Out the open window, she sees Santana with Taylor also known as Jennifer Jessica. Her heart hurts from seeing them together. She thinks that she has no reason to feel jealous. Emily asks if the neck cast hurts and if her neck is going to snap if she doesn't wear it. Daelyn takes off her cast and gives it to her. Emily tells her that she is finally going to the fact camp, and in surprise, Daelyn tells her not to go. Emily's jaw drops in shock that she could speak. In the bathroom, Taylor blocks Daelyn's way and threatens her relationship with Santana. She tells her to watch her back, in return, Daelyn tells her to watch hers. At the bench Santana and Daelyn reconcile and he asks her to have dinner with him for his birthday.

### **-Day of Determination-**

She logs on and the final question appears. The site asks her if she wants to delete her account, she presses *yes*. Her room is cleared and her head is cleared. She took out the last load of trash and she looks around and sees what's left. She thinks that there is no more Daelyn Rice. She sees out the window, a man and dog appear. Man throws the Frisbee and Dog chases it. But instead of retrieving, Dog sits. He drops the Frisbee and makes the man come to him. She smiles to herself and thinks that the game is over and the dog wins. She wishes for Santana to have a dog. His invitation lingers on her mind. She questions herself, "Why me?" But she doesn't know the answer. Her dad calls her and she sticks the Mini Me into her book bag and shut the door behind her. With determination and purpose, she heads into the light.



## CHAPTER STUDY QUESTIONS

**-23 Days-**

**Why is she acting so cautiously around the white boy?**

It's not necessarily about who the person is, Daelyn is not accustomed to being around others. She avoids interacting with people she knows, making it even more difficult for her to stay calm near an unknown boy. It also has to do with the fact that not many people ever stay near her or stare for such a long period of time, as if they had an interest in her at all.

**What do you think is the reason for Daelyn's claustrophobic attack in the car?**

Daelyn has struggled from much inhumane treatment at fat camp, causing her to fear any situation in which she feels trapped. Because she was unable to escape the horrors of school or camp, she feels suffocated in physically closed environments.

**Is a 24 hour suicide watch the best possible option to keep Daelyn out of trouble?**

A 24 hour suicide watch was probably not the smartest idea her parents could come up with. Seeing as she feels trapped in many situations, to keep an eye on her would just bring more negative sentiments. However, there is not much more parents can do to ensure that they're daughter will not make another attempt at taking her life.

**-22 Days-**

**Why do you think all users have the ID J\_Doe along with their date of birth?**

Jane or John Doe is used to refer to people who either have no identity or is unknown. In this way, they make everyone a no one. Which means nobody is special nor any less better. But it also works to strip people of their sense of identity, pushing them towards death.

**Why is Daelyn given specifically 23 days until the day of determination?**

Perhaps the number 23 does not have any particular meaning. The site may have randomly decided on the number because they need to provide Daelyn a reasonable amount of time in which she can rethink the act of committing suicide. It is a sufficient amount of time for her to have people interfere and have second thoughts before deciding to end her life.

**What reason does Daelyn have for ripping out the pages of the book after having read them?**

Perhaps it was symbolic to her throwing away her past. Foreshadowing the change in Daelyn's character, where she will start writing on her own pages, her life that she decides to live. She no longer has to dream of Maggie Louise's life, because she has her own.

**-21 Days-****Is the act of committing suicide a given right?**

People might argue that it is a human's right to decide when they want to end their life, but I feel that because life has been given to them, they should respect that and strive to make things work. Dying is like an act of running away or denying reality; people should face their problems and respect the life that they have.

**Why is it that the teachers are no different from the students in avoiding Daelyn?**

Teachers are probably similar to the parents in that they just don't know how to handle the situation. The only difference between teachers and Daelyn's parents is that teachers aren't responsible for Daelyn and her life. And they surely have no obligation to love her unconditionally.

**Why can't she ignore the green boy the way she does others?**

Something about his genuine attitude as he approaches her, compels Daelyn to him. Also because no one else had taken the initiative to communicate with her; and with such fervor too. Its just like how people are attracted to new or unique things. He is a rare specimen to Daelyn.

**-20 Days-**

**Are Daelyn's past experiences worth the extent of self pity that she feels?**

There are a lot of people out there that have gone through far worse experiences, for longer periods of time. But it is understandable that when in the kind of mental state, that she sees her troubles in a much more inflated light. She is too focused on her problems that she fails to see the big picture.

**If there are so many people logged on to the suicide help site, why is it that Daelyn has never met any one of them?**

Most likely because they are all similar to her in character, quiet and detached. However, it could also be that they live life as if nothing is wrong, hiding their true emotions of pain and suffering. Either way, none of these people easily share what is on their minds, which is why they look for forums such as Through-the-Light on the web.

**Is Daelyn completely free of doubt and hope, which she refers to as impure emotions?**

No she still experiences these feelings of doubt and hope despite what she may think. At the back of her head Daelyn still hopes for change and for someone to come and rescue her. And she doubts her decision to commit suicide.



### **-19 Days, 18 Days-**

#### **Are the parents at fault for having overlooked Daelyn's social issues?**

Parents are also human, and the situation they are in with their daughter Daelyn is not one to be dealt with carelessly. Since they have never experienced such situations in the past, it is obvious that there will be things they either don't understand or don't know. It is not their fault for being imperfect, and people would be placing on them unreasonable expectations.

#### **Why does Daelyn avoid the sexual assault forum?**

Perhaps she wants to avoid the forum that deals with issues much darker than her own. Because she is so immersed in her own self pity, she refuses to open her eyes to the many more people out there that are worse off.

#### **Is Daelyn's mother, Kim, similar to her in any way?**

When Kim speaks of her high school years, it is easy to sense that she is also a woman of few words; about her personal life anyway. She is quite the introvert and she wasn't all that popular, although she had not been bullied like Daelyn.

### **-17 Days-**

#### **What does Daelyn's fear of rats symbolize?**

Normally, one would think that girls fear rats or rodents of any kind. The fact that Daelyn is deadly afraid of Herve characterizes her similarities with normal girls. Proving that she isn't all that different after all.

#### **What do Daelyn's reactions to Santana's actions depict?**

Daelyn's act of blushing and getting nervous pictures a scene of a young child in love. She refuses to touch objects that he had touched just as children would avoid coodies. Her affections towards him are very innocent and naïve.

**Why is Daelyn dissatisfied with every possible method of committing suicide?**

She keeps shooting down the methods of suicide posted on Through-the-Light perhaps because she doesn't actually want to die. So she finds excuses for why she can't use certain methods, and avoids them.

**-16 Days-**

**Why does Daelyn join choral performance when she is mute?**

It could be a form of revenge towards her parents and her peers by doing something they cannot understand. It could also be her way of attracting attention to herself, despite her claim to want detachment. If not any of those, it could be her living in the past once again, to when she used to have a healthy voice.

**Why does Daelyn find herself engaging with Santana?**

With his persistence, she finds herself getting caught up in his pace. Because she desires to connect with others, but hasn't for so long, it comes without much thinking. She enjoys his company even if she refuses to admit it.

**How does Daelyn react to the flattery?**

Daelyn claims that she dislikes his flattery and that she wishes he would stop, but her blushing and other signs say otherwise. She hopes that he would stay by her even if she doesn't know it.

### **-15 Days-**

#### **How is Santana different from other boys in regard to what he wants from Daelyn?**

Daelyn claims that all boys are only interested in one thing. However, Santana has no such motives as he approaches Daelyn, making him all the more compelling to Daelyn. It is so clear that Daelyn is only using this as an excuse to keep herself away from him.

#### **Why do people like Daelyn remain stuck in the past?**

Remaining in the past is very much similar to drowning in one's self pity. She continues to remind herself of all these unfortunate events in order to remind herself of how miserable she is. And also to remind herself of her desire to die.

#### **Why is Santana so persistent in getting Daelyn to interact with him?**

Santana is lonely just like Daelyn, but his situation is very different from hers. She has a chance and a choice to live life the way others do, but he is left with none. Perhaps it was because he understood her character, that he was interested in knowing her thoughts on life.

### **-14 Days-**

#### **What shows her progress with Santana?**

Even if she did refuse to IM him, she hesitated before coming to the decision. Previously, she would have rejected him straight out, but the moment of hesitation represents the improvement made in their relationship.

#### **How will Emily influence Daelyn?**

Emily is one of the first to ever approach Daelyn, and unlike Santana, she is a female and within the school. There is a much greater chance that she will be able to spend more quality time with Daelyn and perhaps win her over.

### **What is school to Daelyn?**

School is a place she is forced to go to by her parents, the most dreadful place where all her peers are Jennifer Jessicas. She couldn't care less about her grades or about learning, it is something she must endure and get over with.

### **-13 Days-**

### **Why does Daelyn feel the need to rid of all her property?**

In the book she claims she doesn't want to leave any memories of herself to her parents.

However, I feel like the act of cleaning out her room represents the cleaning out of her mind.

Removing the thoughts of suicide, slowly but steadily.

### **What does Daelyn think of Emily?**

She sympathizes with her, but not much more than that. She is not willing to go out of her way and be friends with her. She doesn't want to get herself involved now because she believes that her DOD is coming.

### **What made Daelyn take the initiative to IM Santana first?**

Despite her past IM experiences with cyber bullying, Daelyn IMs Santana first because she had nurtured a feeling of trust towards Santana and hope that he would be different.

### **-12 Days, 11 Days-**

**Could moving schools have helped Daelyn?**

If Daelyn had decided to make a clean break from her past and rebuild herself at a new school, a move to a new school could have solved her problems. However, because she was unable to let go of her past, the pattern repeated itself at all her new schools with all her new peers.

**Why does she have such a big misunderstanding about her parents?**

Daelyn is strongly convinced that her parents are embarrassed to have her as a daughter, and sees herself as a burden to them. She assumes these things because she cannot accept herself. Because this is the case, it's hard for her to ever accept another's affections.

**What do you make out of Daelyn's reason for choosing drowning as her method of suicide?**

Perhaps it was because the method was simple and did not require much clean up on the parent's part. It would not be painless and the easiest for her to carry out since she has all the necessary materials.

**-10 Days-****What did Daelyn expect after IMing Santana the other night?**

Daelyn most likely didn't expect anything to happen. She probably assumed that he would neglect her IM message. And even if he did, she doubted he would actually do as she asked.

**Why was she not truthful about the near rape incident?**

It could have been out of fear, which is the most plausible answer. However, in Daelyn's case I believe it was the shame that kept her from letting the others know exactly what the boys did. She blames her mom, but despite Kim's firm questioning, it was Daelyn who had refused to confess.

**Why does she ignore Santana's IM after she herself had IMed him the other night?**

Most likely taken aback by the fact that Santana even bothered to reply to her IM message, Daelyn chickened out when she realized she was failing to detach him. She feared the consequences of her getting closer to him before she killed herself.

**-9 Days-**

**Why does Santana share with Daelyn such an important issue?**

He needed someone other than his mother Ariel to tell of his pain. In the sharing of pain, it is eased and to let something out also brings relief mentally. I'm sure he was also pretty curious as to how she would react in the given situation.

**Why is Daelyn so physically weak?**

Due to her 24 hour suicide watch and her need for neck braces, she is limited in the time she can spend outside doing exercise. Also due to her rapid loss of weight, her muscles would have thinned as a result.

**How did the janitor closet incident effect the way Daelyn viewed herself?**

Because no one had noticed she was gone till the end of the day, and because no one had cared enough to come quicker, she felt her life was pointless. She would be more of a hindrance than anything if alive, and there was no reason for her to live without a purpose.

**-8 Days-**

**What is the point to all the questions asked on Through-the-Light?**

They are there to get users to rethink their decision to commit suicide. Giving them a chance to have second thoughts and go back on their commitment to the site. To trigger the many thoughts regarding life and one's purpose.

**What does the fogbow represent?**

The fogbow represents Daelyn's purpose in life. Its there behind the fog, but it cannot be seen without trying. She had missed it the whole time because she never wanted to see it. But now that she desires to take a look, it is revealed to her.

**What has losing weight done for Daelyn?**

She feels that losing weight does nothing for the person. That because she had originally been born a loser it didn't matter how much she weighed.

**-7 Days-**

**Why does Daelyn refuse to make friends with Emily?**

Because she will be committing suicide in just a few days, she doesn't want to leave Emily all alone afterwards. It would be irresponsible of her to have Emily missing her.

**What does Santana think about Daelyn's suicide attempts?**

I think he has a hard time understanding her reasoning. He is in the opposite situation, where he wants to live but must die. For one who is scared of death, he wonders what she is thinking, but does not judge her either.

**What do you think of Daelyn's wish to have a fatal disease?**

It's pathetic to think that she would fall so low as to wish for a fatal disease when she knows Santana could die because of it. Again she only thinks about her own situation and fails to feel anything towards others.

#### **-6 Days-**

##### **Why is Daelyn so afraid of being buried in a grave?**

It could be because she is afraid of having the body which had always been bullied, remain in its form. She has expressed several times that she did not want anything of hers to be left behind.

##### **What is Santana feeling as he talks about chemo therapy?**

Although he seems so cool about it, I can sense the fear in his speech. Most likely remembering the pain and suffering he had to go through, and the hard times it brought upon him and Ariel. He sounds scared to go back into intense chemo therapy.

##### **Why would Santana want to spend his 18th birthday with Daelyn?**

The way he speaks makes it seem like his last birthday before having to die of cancer. Maybe because they say opposites attract, but Santana seems to be attracted to Daelyn because she is so different.

#### **-5 Days-**

##### **What do Daelyn's expectations of camp before going, say about her in the past?**

She wasn't always as negative or dark. It demonstrates the extent to which fat camp had changed her. She no longer looked forward to things in life until later on in the novel.

##### **What did Daelyn think fat camp was made for?**



Daelyn felt that fat camp was made for the purpose of torturing kids in the absence of their parents. For the sake of the coaches who liked to humiliate children and degrade them daily.

### **Why is it that adults tend not to listen?**

Adults don't know any better than children. They assume that things are okay, make assumptions, jump to conclusions, etc. Because they too don't know everything, they don't consider all the possibilities.

### **-5 Days-**

### **Why did the website repeat the 5th day?**

Perhaps the website decided Daelyn needed one more day to ensure she did not commit suicide. They provided her with 23 days, because that is the time span that they assumed she would need. Therefore, near the end if they felt she was still not ready, they could have extended it for that purpose.

### **What could be the reason for Kim crying?**

Daelyn mentions that Kim rarely speaks of her past, so it is impossible to know exactly what had happened. But it could also be from a feeling of weakness on her part, dealing with Daelyn. She too is much like Daelyn in that way.

### **What makes Daelyn cry?**

Daelyn continuously mentioned how she disliked her mom crying. At first people would assume it was because she disliked people getting emotional, but here we understand that it was because it caused her to get teary. This really shows the love that Daelyn has for her mother.

#### **-4 Days-**

##### **How does Ariel's character influence Daelyn?**

Ariel helps Daelyn understand what her parents must be feeling when faced with their daughter who they feel they may lose. She also helps her see that death does not end everything for everyone.

##### **Why does she like the painting on the ceiling?**

The painting on the ceiling is that of clouds and a sky. Perhaps because Daelyn always wants to feel free, the painting of a vast sky is inviting to her. She admires the artwork and enjoys it.

##### **What does the scene of Ariel and Santana's argument say about their relationship?**

They both love each other although it may not seem like it. However, both of them are also scared of what will happen to Santana. They have been preparing themselves for years now, but they worry for each other.

#### **-3 Days-**

##### **Why won't the site let her answer as a question?**

She is supposed to have an answer, not a question to a question. Therefore, its as if telling her, either she answers it or wait to think about a possible answer.

##### **How much progress has she made with the idea of life and death?**

She is still considering the act of killing herself. Although she had made a lot of progress on her inner mind, she still thinks the way she used to. It has not broken through to her outer self.

##### **What does Daelyn's continued posts about fat camp say?**

It shows that she still hasn't gotten over her past. 3 days before her DOD, she is still lost. It could also mean however, that she is writing all this down on the site in order to get it out of her system, and start anew.

### **-2 Days-**

**What does the fact that she has things she enjoys tell you about her readiness for death?**

She talks about how much she enjoys pizza, saying that there were still things in this world she enjoyed. The thing is, she now enjoys Santana's company as well as her parents. When one has people to love, they are no longer ready for death.

**How does Santana's memoir video effect Daelyn?**

I think it helped her finally understand the severity of Santana's cancer. Before she had taken it too lightly, and thought many inappropriate things. She realizes that just because Santana acts okay around her does not mean he is.

**Why does Daelyn rush into telling Santana about her drinking bleach and ammonia?**

I have a feeling that she had always wanted to let him know, but was hesitant. When he was leaving she suddenly felt desperation and the need to tell him before it was too late.

### **-1 Day-**

**What does she realize when she realizes she will never see her mom again?**

Daelyn panics when she realizes she will no longer see her mother before the day of suicide. She wants to see her again, meaning she is not ready to leave her or anyone else for that matter.

**Her jealousy represents what?**

Her feelings of jealousy towards Jennifer Jessica represents her realization of the affections she holds for Santana. It is a sort of confirmation to her feelings so that she can no longer deny it.

**Why does Daelyn choose now to start speaking again?**

I feel that she realized desperate times calls for desperate measures. And when she realized Emily's cheeriness may be crushed at fat camp, she felt the urge and need to stop her.

**-Day of Determination-**

**What does it mean when she says she has cleared everything out of her room and mind?**

It symbolizes the clearing of the old Daelyn, making room for the new. She is restarting her life from a clean slate.

**What does the dog and human represent?**

The dog represents Santana, and the manipulated human represents Daelyn. It shows how Santana has managed to capture Daelyn in the end.

**Has she found the answer to her question?**

Not yet, but she has a goal to look for it. That is her goal for now, to seek her purpose. Since she made it this far, she is sure to find the reason to why it must be her.



## NOVEL UNIT TEST

### True/False

1. Daelyn attends a Christian high school. (True/False)
2. Santana is homeschooled. (True/False)
3. Daelyn's father works, but her mother doesn't. (True/False)
4. After school, Daelyn walks home. (True/False)
5. Santana is two years older than Daelyn (True/False)

### Sentence Completion

6. Everybody on Through-the-Light has an ID that starts with \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The three selections on the main menu are: Date of Determination, Final Forum, and \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Daelyn calls her parents by their first names, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in order to detach herself from them.
9. When young Daelyn sang at the audition, the judges rejected her because she was \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Daelyn's mother says that she tried out for \_\_\_\_\_ with her friend Bonnie.

### Multiple Choice

#### 11. What is Santana's IM name?

- A. HarveyHotsU      B. HerveHotsU      C. HarveyHatesU      D. HerveHatesU

#### 12. Where does Daelyn's mother take Daelyn for Saturday brunch?

A. Small Village      B. Oxford Town      C. Tiny Town      D. Happy Town

**13. What is Daelyn's religion?**

A. Christianity      B. Catholicity      C. Muslim      D. Atheism

**14. What is the name of the boy who tried to rape Daelyn?**

A. Tommy      B. Tony      C. Toomey      D. Timmy

**15. What position does Mr. Hyatt ask Daelyn to sing?**

A. Soprano      B. Alto      C. Tenor      D. Bass

**16. What is the excuse that Daelyn gives to her dad whenever he asks her why she is always on the internet?**

- A. She says that she is writing a story for English class
- B. She says that she is chatting with Santana
- C. She says that she is looking at the websites of the colleges she wants to go to
- D. She says that she is watching aerobic videos so that she could learn how to lose weight

**17. What illness does Santana have?**

A. Leukemia      B. Luegarics disease      C. Amnesia      D. Hodgkin's lymphoma

**18. Why was Daelyn locked inside the janitor's closet?**

- A. Because her friends lied to her and shoved her inside
- B. Because she accidentally locked herself in while looking for the janitor
- C. Because an upperclassman wanted to punish her for being selfish
- D. Because the janitor bullied her for her obesity

**19. How did the girl in Daelyn's seventh grade art class draw her?**

- A. She drew a huge pig with curly hair and braces

- B. She drew nothing
- C. She drew a blob with bandages on both wrists
- D. She drew an actual portrait of her that looked quite realistic

**20. How many pounds did Daelyn lose weight after fat camp?**

- A. 72
- B. 40
- C. 66
- D. 38

**21. What method does Daelyn choose for her suicide?**

- A. Starvation
- B. Freezing
- C. Drowning
- D. Hanging herself

**22. How many days to Date of Determination does Through-the-Light repeat, instead of counting down?**

- A. 10 Days
- B. 5 Days
- C. 7 Days
- D. 8 Days

**23. What quality or possession of Maggie Louise does Daelyn NOT admire?**

- A. Beauty
- B. Being loved
- C. Charles
- D. Confidence

**24. On what special day did Santana's father die?**

- A. Valentine's Day
- B. Christmas
- C. Ariel's birthday
- D. Wedding day

**25. What does Santana tell Ariel that he wants for his birthday?**

- A. Daelyn
- B. Karaoke
- C. A Dog
- D. A camera

### **Short Answer**

26. What happens to Daelyn at the audition?

27. Why are Daelyn's esophagus and vocal chords damaged?

28. What is Daelyn's attitude towards Dr. Novotny, the family therapist?
29. What does Daelyn find her dad working on when she returns from town with her mother?
30. What do Jennifer Jessica, a.k.a. Taylor, and her friends do to Daely during chorus rehearsal?
31. What happens to Daelyn after she has been locked up in the janitor's closet for eight hours?
32. What does Daelyn's mother think about Santana?
33. What does Daelyn do that surprises Emily?
34. What is revealed about the bench that Daelyn calls "mine?"



35. What does Daelyn do on the Day of Determination?

### **Essays**

36. What do you think about Daelyn's perception of her own life? Do you think that it is really bad as she thinks?

37. How do the attitudes of Daelyn and Santana toward their parents differ?

38. What do you think was the role of Through-the-Light.com in the novel? How did the site influence Daelyn?

39. What was Santana's purpose in the novel?

40. How does the last book of Daelyn's favorite series, *Desire in the Marsh*, relate to her life?

Do you think the book influenced in making her decisions?



## **NOVEL UNIT TEST ANSWER KEY**

### **True/False**

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True

### **Sentence Completion**

6. J\_Doe
7. Ways To Go.
8. Chip, Kim
9. overweight.
10. pom-pom girls

### **Multiple Choice**

11. B
12. C
13. D
14. C
15. B
16. A

17. D

18. A

19. C

20. A

21. C

22. B

23. C

24. D

25. C

### **Short Answer**

26. Daelyn does not want to go inside because she is nervous, but her dad makes her sing anyways. After Daelyn sings “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” the judges claim that she has a nice voice, but is not the “type” they’re looking for.

27. Daelyn’s esophagus and vocal chords are damaged because she drank ammonia and bleach so that she could die. This is also the reason why Daelyn has to wear her neck brace.

28. Daelyn’s attitude is quite cynical and indifferent towards him. She does not believe that he is helpful at all and secretly mocks him inside.

29. When Daelyn returns from Tiny Town with her mother, she finds her dad busily installing a network to link his computer to hers. She realizes that his father is doing that so that he can monitor what Daelyn does on the internet all the time.
30. Jennifer Jessica keeps pushing and nudging Daelyn with her friends. The three girls surround her and press their shoulders against Daelyn's, forcing Daelyn out of line.
31. Daelyn's parents, the principal, and the janitor open the door and find Daelyn, who has wet her pants. Instead of asking Daelyn whether she is alright, Daelyn's mother asks him what she has done this time. None of the adults seem relieved that she has been found.
32. At first, Daelyn's mother is suspicious of Santana and does not want Daelyn to have anything to do with him. However, as the story proceeds, she realizes that he is a sincere boy and encourages Daelyn to become good friends with him.
33. The day before her Day of Determination, Daelyn actually responds to Emily when she says that she will be going to fat camp in the summer. Daelyn tells Emily not to go, which makes Emily's eyes widen in surprise.
34. The bench that Daelyn is always so protective of is actually made by Santana's family, in memorial of Santana's dead father. Daelyn realizes that she had no right to call the bench hers and keep Santana away from it.

35. On the Day of Determination, Daelyn deletes her account on Through-the-Light. She leaves her room full of determination when her dad calls for her.

## **Essays**

36. In my opinion, Daelyn makes her life seem much more tragic than what it actually is.

Whenever she is looking at the forums on Through-the-Light, she always looks down on others who talk about why they want to suicide, as if their situations are not as severe or important as her own. For example, on page 29, when J\_Doe081967 talks about trying to suicide 12 times, Daelyn thinks, “What a liar. Trying is failing.” Although there are many people who talk about events in their lives that are much more worse than that of Daelyn’s, she ignores those comments and only tries to think of herself as the most hurt one. She also ignores the fact that there are people around her that try to befriend her and understand her. It seems like this also points out how people often fail to see the pain of others. People are often blind to the negative aspects of the others’ lives and that people tend to make their own problems seem more dramatic.

37. Although they are both expecting to die before their parents, Daelyn is unable to see how her death would impact her parents, unlike Santana does. Daelyn is so focused on her suicide that she fails to see how her death will affect her parents. Rather, she believes that her parents wouldn’t be too sad about her death and claims that “they’ll be better off without me [her]” on page 160. On the other hand, Santana worries that his death would affect his mother and

hopes to go on living. He does not even tell about the new lump on his back and states that “I’m all she’s got and if I don’t make it this time...” on page 160. Not only does Daelyn’s envy of Santana’s fatal disease reflect her shallowness, but the difference in the attitudes towards their parents also emphasizes her immaturity.

38. The role of Through-the-Light in the novel was actually to guide people to another direction so that they decide not to die. Although the site seems like a site that supports people’s suicides, it actually seems like it has an ulterior purpose. For example, on page 192, the questions that the site asks Daelyn, such as “who becomes you?” or “what choices do you have?” sound like they are meant to make people rethink about their decision. Also, when Daelyn writes “none” to this question, the website does not accept the answer which further supports the idea that it actually supports to make people change their minds about killing themselves. Not only that, but the name of the website, Through-the-Light, is also quite hopeful. It relates to light, which is more related to hopefulness, instead of the dark that is closer to death. Thus, it seems like Through-the-Light actually exists to help people find hope in their lives and start a new life.

39. I believe that Santana’s purpose in the novel was to bring Daelyn out from her shell. His consistent effort to communicate and befriend Daelyn, even after he notices the other students such as Jennifer Jessica mock Daelyn, proves that he does not care whether Daelyn is a “loser” or not. Despite Daelyn’s suspicions and cold attitude towards him, Santana only works harder to become friends with Daelyn. In fact, on page 181, he asks Daelyn “is it a



crime for a guy to like a girl?” when she asks what he wants from her. It could be that he does not have the stereotypical type of view that most high schoolers have because he is homeschooled, as he believes that Daelyn is beautiful. His kind attitude and sincere personality do end up bringing Daelyn out of her shell, which is why she changes her mind about death.

40. The book ends with Maggie Louise realizing that Charles is the man that she has desired all along and comes to appreciate him. Just like Maggie Louise, Daelyn finds true love in Santana at the same time. Daelyn has always envied Maggie Louise for being the exact opposite of herself, a beautiful woman with a lot of men. However, both Maggie Louise and Daelyn were unable to find, or realize, that what they had truly wanted was true love. Maggie Louise’s realization in the novel, that “you must follow your heart’s desire, for it will lead you to your destiny,” on page 195, helps Daelyn think about her own desires. Both Charles and Santana are the ones who always have remained truthful and devoted to Maggie Louise and Daelyn, who were too blind to realize this. However, in the end, just like Maggie Louise ended up, Daelyn also realizes that it is more important to accept oneself and be loved by the one she loves.